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ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SS-20 SSO-00 ISO-00 NEA-14 IO-14

SAM-01 SAB-01 SCCT-02 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE ,02399

TOSEC 711

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF

SUBJECT: MORE WORLD REACTION TO MA'ALOT INCIDENT

REF: STATE 101859

1. FOLLOWING IS ROUNDUP OF FURTHER ARAB REACTIONS AVAILABLE
AS OF 1000 EDT. ONLY AVAILABLE SOVIET ACTION INCLUDED.

2. IN DAMASCUS, INITIAL REPORTS THAT ISRAEL HAD AGREED
TO MEET FEDAYEEN DEMANDS MADE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION AND
WERE SEEN AS INDICATION OF GROWING ISRAELI "FLEXIBILITY
AND REALISM." SUBSEQUENTLY, THIS FEELING TURNED TO
BITTERNESS AND ANGER OVER ISRAELI "TREACHERY AND DECEIT"
IN DEALING WITH THE FEDAYEEN AND THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED
NEWS MEDIA PLACE FULL BLAME FOR THE MASSACRE ON ISRAEL.
IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE SCOTES, PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY
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ELIAS STRESSED THAT SYRIA HAD NOT KNOWN ABOUT THE OPERATION

IN ADVANCE AND WOULD NOT ALLOW IT TO HAVE ANY BEARING ON CURRENT SYRIAN/ISRAELI TALKS.

3. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL COMMENT FROM EGYPT, BUT PRIVATELY EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS SAID EGYPT CONDEMNS ALL ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST INNOCENT PEOPLE. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE INCIDENT WOULD SO INFLAME ISRAELI PUBLIC OPINION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREVENTED FROM MAKING CONCESSIONS TO SYRIA IN THE DIS-ENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. OTHERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE

RAID WOULD DEMONSTRATE TO THE ISRAELIS THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PALESTINIANS.

4. EGYPTIAN AND JORDANIAN PAPERS BLAME ISRAEL'S HANDLING OF THE INCIDENT AND DECISION TO STORM THE SCHOOL FOR THE LOSS OF LIFE AT MA'ALOT. CAIRO PAPERS, FOR EXAMPLE, STATE THAT THE FEDAYEEN WERE FORCED TO BLOW THEMSELVES AND THE SCHOOL UP WHEN ISRAEL TRIED TO DECEIVE THEM. THE TARGET WAS NOT THE SCHOOL, BUT THE RELEASE OF THEIR COLLEAGUES IMPRISONED IN ISRAEL. AL-AHRAM EDITORIAL EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNIZING THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS, ADDING, "THE REAL CULPRITS ARE THOSE WHO RENDERED HOMELESS THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE..." CITING REPORTS FROM DAMASCUS, THE PAPER OPINED THAT THE SECRETARY'S MISSION HAS BEEN MADE MORE COMPLICATED. AMMAN'S SEMI-OFFICIAL AD-DESTOUR STRESSED THAT JORDAN DOES NOT ADVOCATE OR ENCOURAGE ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS AND CIVILIAN INSTITUTIONS, BUT INCIDENTS LIKE MA'ALOT GROW OUT OF THE ARAB REJECTION OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ARAB LAND. THEY ARE A RESPONSE TO ISRAEL'S INTRANSIGENCE AND REJECTION OF EFFORTS TO REACH A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

5. IN AN INTERVIEW APPEARING IN THE BEIRUT INDEPENDENT DAILY AN-NAHAR MAY 16, NAYIF HAWATIMAH, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PDPFP, SAID THE MA'ALOT OPERATION WAS STAGED TO DEMONSTRATE PALESTINIAN REJECTION OF THE SECRETARY'S "ATTEMPTS TO LIQUIDATE THE PALESTINE PROBLEM." IT WAS ALSO DESIGNED, HE SAID, TO WARN AGAINST HANDING THE WEST BANK BACK TO KING HUSAYN; "ATTEMPTS TO DIVIDE THE

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PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AGAIN BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE HASHEMITE REGIME WILL NOT SUCCEED," HE DECLARED. HAWATIMAH ALSO REAFFIRMED HIS GROUP'S SUPPORT FOR ESTABLISHING AN INTERIM PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY ON ANY PALESTINIAN TERRITORY WON BACK FROM ISRAEL.

6. IRAQI AND SYRIAN PAPERS THIS MORNING HIGHLIGHT DETAILS OF THE "TARSHIHA" (THE FORMER ARAB VILLAGE AT MA'ALOT)

INCIDENT. IT, AND THE KIRYAT SHEMONA INCIDENT, HAVE ESTABLISHED THE ABILITY OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO CARRY THE "STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION INTO THE OCCUPIED LANDS". FURTHERMORE, TARSHIHA" DEMONSTRATES THAT ISRAEL CANNOT OBTAIN SECURE BORDERS BY CONTINUING TO IGNORE THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS. BAGHDAD'S AL-JUMHURIYA REFERS TO "SUSPICIOUS AGREEMENTS" WHICH SOME RULERS ARE MAKING AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND SAYS THAT "THEY WILL REMAIN INK ON PAPER THAT WILL COLLAPSE AT THE FIRST STROKE AS LONG AS THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO REJECT CAPITULATION."

7. THE MEAGER SOVIET REACTION SO FAR HAS ECHOED THE ARAB LINE. A MAY 16 TASS ITEM HEADLINED "TEL AVIV'S PER-FIDIOUS ACTIONS" CHARACTERIZES THE DEATHS OF "SCHOOL CHILDREN AND PALESTINIAN GUERILLAS" AS A "TRAGEDY" CAUSED BY "PERFIDIOUS ACTIONS OF THE ISRAELI MILITARY." TASS DID NOT MENTION THAT THE PALESTINIANS WERE HOLDING THE CHILDREN HOSTAGE, BUT SAID ONLY THAT THEY HAD "BLOCKED" THE SCHOOL. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS CONDEMNED FOR SENDING IN TROOPS, AND TASS CLAIMED THAT THE PEOPLE OF MA'ALOT DENOUNCED THIS "TREACHEROUS ACTION." RUSH

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